

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.-18. (Canceled).

19. (new) A microemulsion not containing any active pharmaceutical agent, said microemulsion comprising 5 to 35 wt% of a non-polar animal or vegetable oil, 10 to 55 wt% of at least one polar solvent selected from the group of water, a buffer, an alcohol, and mixtures thereof, and at least one surfactant selected from a polysorbate, a poloxamer and a fatty acid polyoxyethylene, wherein the microemulsion further comprises 20-50 wt% of a monoacyl glycerol.

20. (new) A microemulsion suitable for entrapping airborne particles, consisting of 5 to 35 wt% of a non-polar animal or vegetable oil, 10 to 55 wt% of at least one polar solvent selected from the group consisting of water, a buffer, an alcohol, and mixtures thereof, and at least one surfactant selected from the group consisting of a polysorbate, a poloxamer and a fatty acid polyoxyethylene, wherein the microemulsion further comprises 20-50 wt% of a monoacyl glycerol.

21. (new) The microemulsion as claimed in claim 19 or claim 20 wherein said monoacyl glyceride is glyceryl monooleate, glyceryl monolinoleate or glyceryl monolinolenoleate.

22. (new) The microemulsion as claimed in any of claim 19 or 20, wherein said non-polar animal or vegetable oil comprises sesame oil.

23. (new) The microemulsion as claimed in claim 19 or 20, wherein at least one component of said polar solvent has a pH exceeding pH 5.5.

24. (new) The microemulsion as claimed in claim 19 or 20, wherein said polar solvent comprises propylene glycol and/or polyethylene glycol and/or saline solution.

25. (new) The microemulsion as claimed in claim 19 or 20, wherein said surfactant has a hydrophilic-hydrophobic balance exceeding 7.

26. (new) The microemulsion as claimed in claim 19 or 20 wherein said polysorbate is polysorbate 80.

27. (new) A composition suitable for administration to peripheral membrane linings of the nose, the eyes, the ears, the pharynx, and/or the larynx of a mammal, characterized in that it comprises a pharmaceutically effective amount of a microemulsion as claimed in claim 19 or 20.

28. (new) A mouth or nasal spray device containing the microemulsion as claimed in claim 19 or 20.

29. (new) A filter device comprising the microemulsion as claimed in claim 19 or 20.

30. (new) A mouth or nasal spray device containing the composition as claimed in claim 27.

31. (new) A method for preventing allergic rhinitis in a subject, caused directly or indirectly by airborne particles, said method comprising contacting at least one surface of said subject with a composition as claimed in claim 26.

32. (new) A method of preventing airborne particles reaching exterior mucosal membranes of a mammal, said method comprising the step of administering to said exterior mucosal membranes of said mammal a prophylactically effective amount of a composition as claimed claim 27.

33. (new) The method as claimed in claim 32, wherein said composition is administered buccally or intranasally.